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C O N F I D E N T I A L HARARE 001180

SIPDIS

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR J. FRAZER
LONDON FOR C. GURNEY
PARIS FOR C. NEARY
BANGKOK FOR WIN DAYTON
DS/OP/AF

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/10/2008

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [ZI](#)

SUBJECT: HIGH COURT TO HEAR TSVANGIRAI BAIL APPLICATION;
BISHOPS CONTINUE TO PRESS FOR DIALOGUE

Classified By: POLITICAL OFFICER PEGGY BLACKFORD FOR REASONS 1.5B/D

TSVANGIRAI REMAINS IN CUSTODY: NCUBE EXPECTED TO BE RELEASED

SIPDIS
TODAY

¶1. (SBU) Morgan Tsvangirai, MDC President, arrived in Magistrates Court this morning looking tired and dressed in a track suit rather than his usual business attire. A large contingent of his supporters were on hand outside the court to cheer him on but they were outnumbered by Law and Order Police who jammed the court room. At the hearing the Magistrate placed Tsvangirai on remand until July 10. (Remand is similar to arraignment and means that the judge has found the State has sufficient evidence to hold the suspect.) Normally the Magistrate would have entertained a bail hearing at the same time; however, Magistrate's Court does not have the authority to set bail on treason charges. Instead Tsvangirai's attorney planned to ask for bail this afternoon before the High Court which decided to hear the case in camera. According to the attorney, the Attorney-General requested a delay in the hearing which has been rescheduled to tomorrow morning, June 11.

¶2. (SBU) Welshman Ncube, Secretary-General of the MDC, who was also detained on new treason charges yesterday was being held in Harare Central Prison. His attorney reported that he believed Ncube would be released today.

BISHOPS BRIEF MDC ON DISCUSSIONS WITH ZANU-PF LEADERS

¶3. (C) Special Advisor to MDC President Tsvangirai, Gandhi Mudzingwa, told PolOff that the MDC leadership had been briefed by the local bishops on their progress in getting ZANU-PF to the negotiating table. According to the bishops, high ranking ZANU-PF leaders including Nathan Shamuyarira and John Nkomo have assured them that ZANU is committed to dialogue and is looking to find a way forward rather than to review old grievances. MDC leaders reminded the bishops that MDC President, at their last briefing, had emphasized the need for President Mugabe to make a public commitment to dialogue. Mudzingwa remains skeptical that such a commitment will be forth coming in the near future.

COMMENT

¶4. (C) Today's "Daily News" editorial asks, "Could crackdown herald peace talks?" and reviews Mugabe's history of negotiating only after doing everything possible to weaken his opponent as he did in the eighties when he co-opted Joshua Nkomo and his ZAPU party into the ZANU ranks. This may, indeed, be Mugabe's strategy. Even Mugabe must recognize that while he may have won last week's battle, it will only gain him a little time unless the serious issues facing the economy are resolved. It would explain why rumors of ZANU-PF overtures to the MDC are rife at the same time the GOZ is doing all within its power to undercut the MDC leadership in public.

SULLIVAN